AKIRA 38™

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 38

THE FINAL CHAPTER

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

2030. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. **Kaneda,** onetime leader of a delinquent gang, is caught up in the aftermath of a power struggle between a Japanese military research organization – led by a man known only as the **Colonel** – and a resistance group whose members included **Kay, Ryu,** and a formidable woman named **Chiyoko**.

The Colonel had a number of psychic children under his control. Each one was identified by a number tattooed on the hand. Among them were **Kiyoko** and **Masaru** – Numbers 25 and 27. The blind **Lady Miyako** – Number 19 – now heads a great religious cult. Number 41 is **Tetsuo,** who lost his left arm to a laser blast from the Colonel's military satellite SOL, and has used cybernetics and telekinesis to fabricate a prosthetic replacement. **Tetsuo** was Kaneda's dearest friend until he used his burgeoning powers to slaughter other members of their gang. Now **Kaneda** is out for revenge.

Most powerful of all the children is Number 28 – **Akira**. Almost forty years ago he started the Third World War with a mental blast. He has since been in a cryogenic sleep. **Akira** was recently reawakened by **Tetsuo,** and again he devastated the reconstructed city of Neo-Tokyo. Japan now exists in a state of emergency with the army and the members of the resistance scattered throughout.

In the western part of Neo-Tokyo, the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed – a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. To the east, **Lady Miyako** welcomes refugees to her shrine. In this, she is aided by **Kiyoko, Masaru,** and a number of loyal psychic monks.

The **Empire** is infiltrated by teams of spies and commando units from the outside world, equipped with biochemical armaments which take a tremendous toll on Tetsuo's forces.

A fleet of foreign ships waits in Tokyo Bay, poised for action. Aboard an American naval vessel, an international conclave of scientists and one Tibetan monk study the **Akira** phenomenon – which they've codenamed **Juvenile A**. One of the scientists – **Stanley Simmons** – goes ashore to implement a secret plan. The research team is certain that using military force against **Akira** and **Tetsuo** can only lead to disaster. When the fleet sends fighter planes against **Tetsuo,** he sinks their flagship, forcing the survivors to flee.

Meanwhile, **Kay** joins Miyako's forces in battle against **Tetsuo,** because **Kay** is a powerful medium, through

whom the others can project their powers and strike as one

Kaneda teams up with **Kai** and **Joker** – a friend and rival from his gang days. Using salvaged weapons the trio lead a ragtag force to help **Kay** battle **Tetsuo**. As they fight, **Akira** looks placidly on, drawn by the similarity of Tetsuo's powers to his own.

Tetsuo is griefstricken over the death of his gentle girlfriend, **Kaori.** He carries her body to the underground chamber where **Akira** once slept. **Akira** follows and is joined by **Kaneda, Joker, Chiyoko** and **Ryu.** They prepare to fight in the bowels of the earth, where many of their comrades died.

Tetsuo's powers have grown erratic. His body frequently bloats and expands, engulfing those who venture too close. For a moment, it seems that contact with **Kaneda** has restored Tetsuo's humanity. Then, Tetsuo's power comes surging back and **Kaneda** is drawn into his monstrous form, apparently consumed. As the battle rages, **Akira** becomes more alert. Terrified at what might occur if **Akira** awakens fully, **Ryu** panics. He draws a gun and shoots **Akira,** setting the boy's power free.

Seeking a new power source for himself, **Tetsuo** flies to Lady Miyako's shrine. **Kay** follows in hot pursuit. **Lady Miyako** instructs **Kiyoko** and **Masaru** to look after **Akira,** and the pair teleport away to help their friend. **Lady Miyako,** her followers, and **Kay** prepare to make a final stand against **Tetsuo.**

Kiyoko and **Masaru** meet **Akira** on the psychic plane. They are joined by the spirits of all the gifted children who have died before.

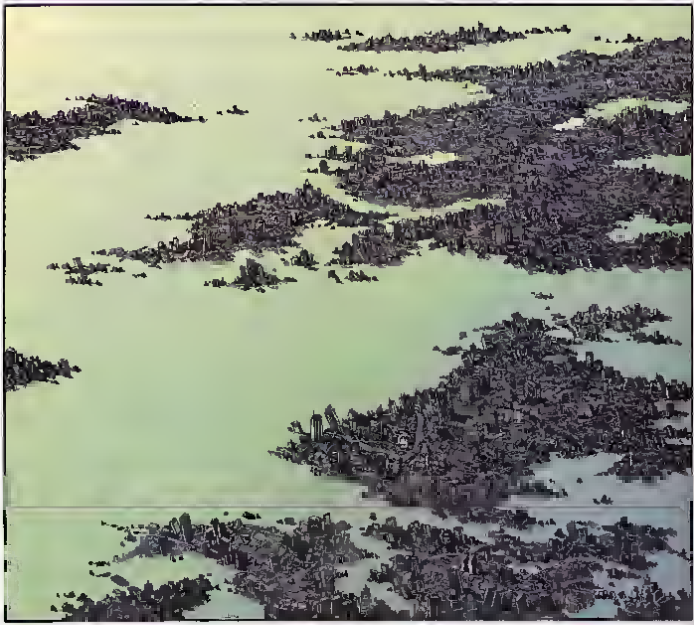
Telling **Kay** that the resolution depends on her, **Lady Miyako** heroically draws **Tetsuo** to herself and is killed. As she dies, she, too, is drawn to the spirit plane, where the souls of friends who have gone before await.

Kay is guided in battle by her late mentor's commands, and is able to break through to **Tetsuo.** His concentration interrupted, he is vulnerable, and is himself consumed by the force of Akira's mind.

Trapped within Tetsuo's soul, **Kaneda** experiences a fractured, kaleidoscopic journey through his late friend's life and hardships. He shares with **Tetsuo** both the good memories and the bad.

Kaneda is contacted by Lady Miyako's spirit, and is stunned by what she tells him. Although **Tetsuo** and **Akira** were created in laboratories, they, along with all the catastrophe they bring, are a vital part of mankind's evolution. All this madness has been part of a greater cosmic good.

As Tetsuo's spirit joins the others on a higher plane, **Kaneda** is guided back to reality, sanity and safety by friends who still need him in the world he left behind.

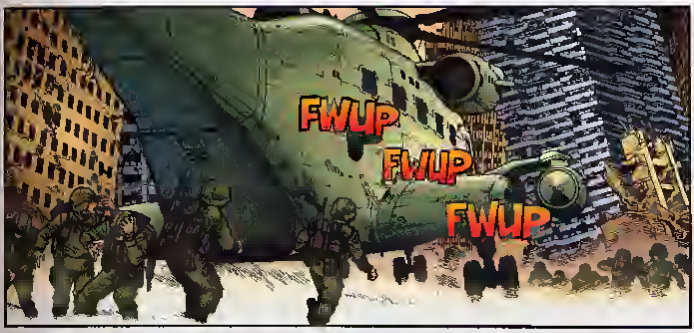


DRRNN

FWUP
FWUP
FWUP
FWUP

KLANK
KLANK
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA

SPLASH
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
BUDDA

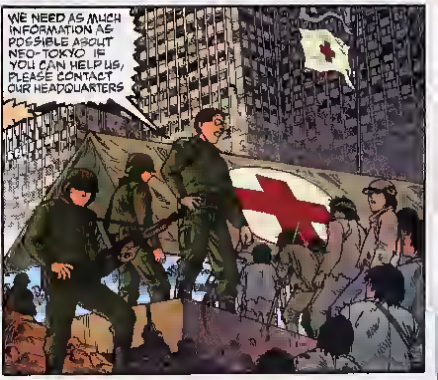

FWUP
FWUP
FWUP

SO FAR WE HAVEN'T MET WITH ANY RESISTANCE
ALL WE'VE SEEN ARE REFUGEES ASKING FOR FOOD AND MEDICAL HELP

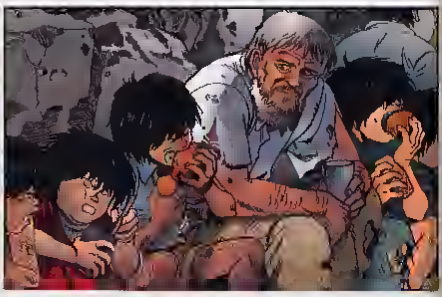
WHAT ABOUT THE SCOUTING PARTY?
THEY'RE SCHEDULED TO DEPART AT 1500 HOURS.
GOOD!
FWUP FWUP FWUP

NEXT!

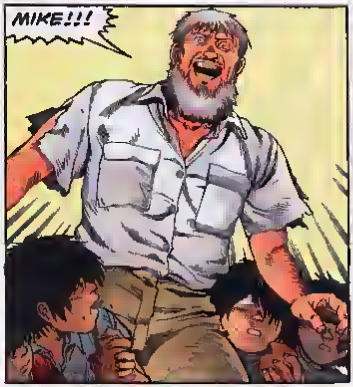
IF YOU'RE HERE FOR FOOD, LINE UP ON THE RIGHT. ANYONE WHO NEEDS A MEDIC, LINE UP ON THE LEFT.

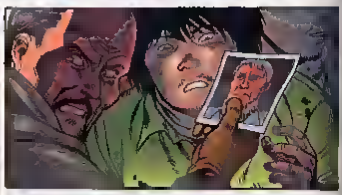

WE NEED AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE ABOUT NEO-TOKYO. IF YOU CAN HELP US, PLEASE CONTACT OUR HEADQUARTERS

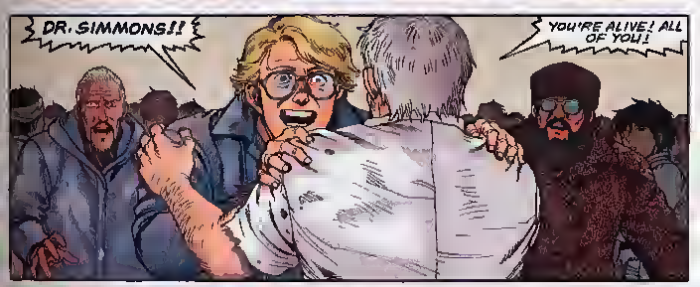
CHOMP CHOMP



...DR. SIMMONS...


MIKE!!!




DR. SIMMONS!!
YOU'RE ALIVE! ALL OF YOU!

THE SCOUTING PARTY IS READY TO DEPART!

MOVE OUT!
RRRRN
RRRRRRRR

FWOOM
BOOOM
FWOOM

RETREAT!
BWAHOOM
CLATTER
vhhh

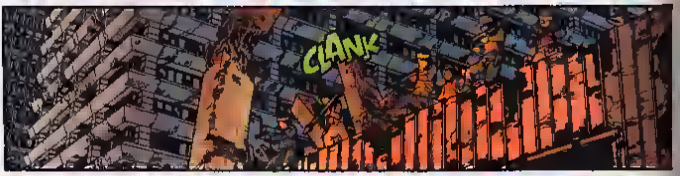
UP THERE!
WHAT'S THAT?!
VRRR

VIIII

VRRRNNNN

BASTARD!
WAIT—!

HUNH?
LOOK!


CLANK

CLANK

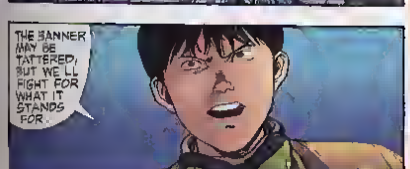
WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE? I WANNA TALK TO THE BOSS!
DON'T TELL ME MY LITTLE FIGHT SHOW ACTUALLY SCARED YOU SOLDIER BOYS
STOP TRYING TO PROVOKE US! WE HAVEN'T COME HERE TO FIGHT!
NO? THEN HOW COME ALL THE GUNS AND TANKS AND AMMO?
WE ARE AN OFFICIAL PEACEKEEPING FORCE SENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS TO HELP REFUGEES AND RESTORE ORDER!

BULLSHIT!
PACK UP YOUR WEAPONS--
--AND GET THE HELL OUT OF OUR COUNTRY!
YEAH, YOU HEARD THE MAN.
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT?
GET A LOAD OF THIS!
FLIP
GREATAKI
EMPI

GREAT AKIRA
EMPIRE

WHAT--?

ARE YOU PEOPLE CRAZY? WE'RE NOT INVADERS! WE WERE SENT BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT!


THE BANNER MAY BE TATTERED, BUT WE'LL FIGHT FOR WHAT IT STANDS FOR.

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
ALL RIGHT! LET'S GO.
HALT!
!
SMEK
FUF
CLATTER

KRUNK
...TWO--!
SLUK
...AND A-ONE...
HMMM.
DRRRN
WHAT IN...?
DDRRRRNN

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR LITTLE WELCOMING COMMITTEE?
YIPE!
DRRRRNN
DRRRN
AAUUGH!
DRRRN

DDRRRRNN
GOOD WORK, KAI!
DRRRNN
DRRRRNNNN
DDRRRRNNN

DRRRN
DRRRN
WE'LL KEEP THE FOOD...
...AND ALL OF YOUR MEDICAL SUPPLIES
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THAT YOU'RE LEAVING. NOW!

THIS IS A SOVEREIGN NATION. IF YOU COME AGAIN WITHOUT AN INVITATION, WE'RE GONNA TREAT YOU AS INVADERS.
SLUK
SLUK
HUNH?
FALL BACK.
DRRRRRRRRRRRRRN

BUT...
WAIT...!
THE MEMORY OF AKIRA LIVES ON IN OUR HEARTS!
DRINNN
DRRRRRN

GREAT AKIRA
EMPIRE
?!

SKRRREE
YOU'RE VERY SURE OF YOURSELVES, AREN'T YOU? AND YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN BEAT THEM?
NO, THANK YOU. THIS IS ONE LAME OLD WAR HORSE WHO'S PUT HIMSELF OUT TO PASTURE.
WHY NOT? I WANT TO ENLIST?

THEN WE'LL BE OFF.
COLONEL...
THANK YOU. FOR EVERY-THING.
YOU, TOO. TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELVES.
DRRR NN

RRUMBLE

RRUMBLE

A

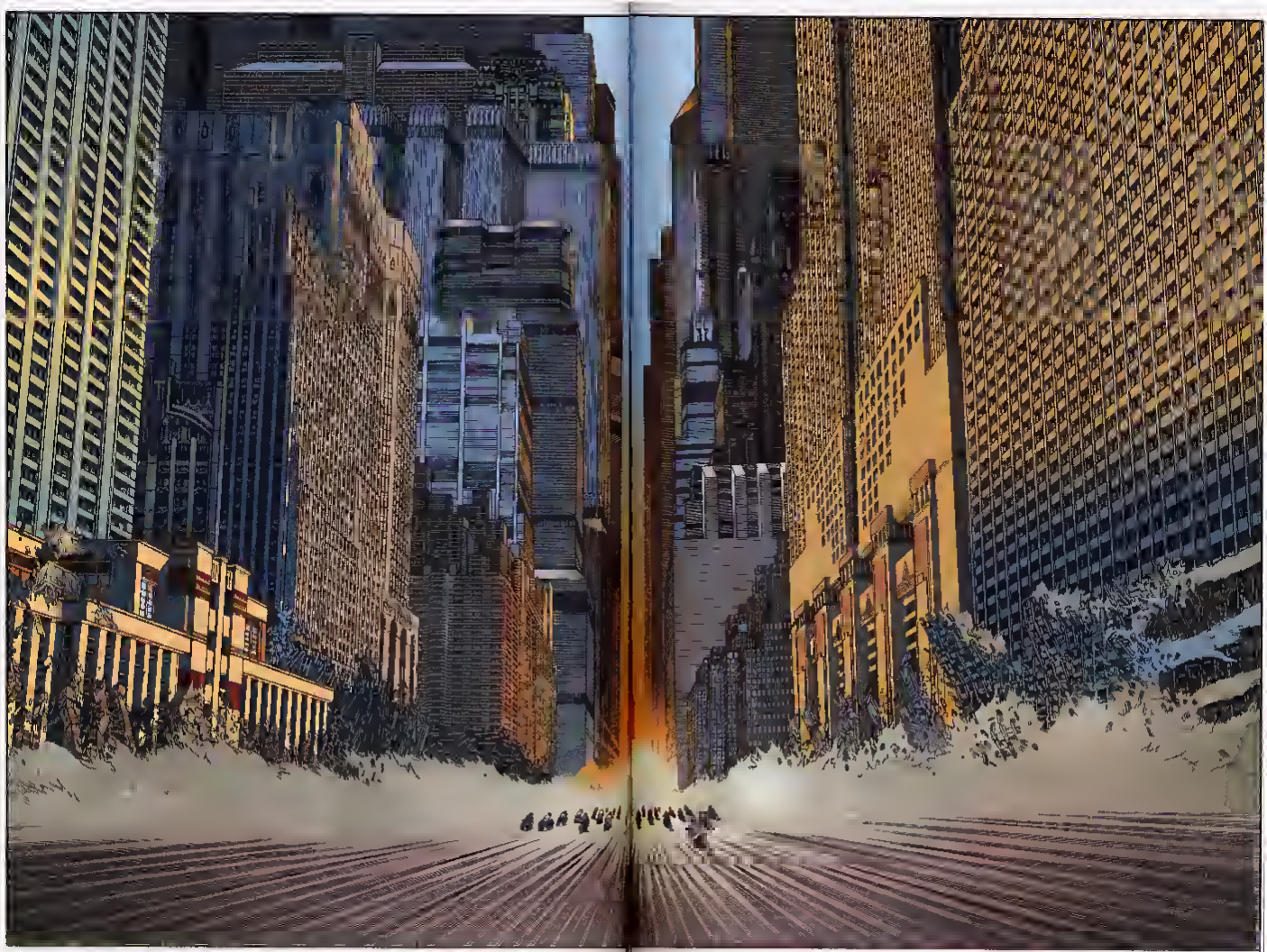
AROUND HERE THERE'S A LEGEND THAT AKIRA NEVER DIED

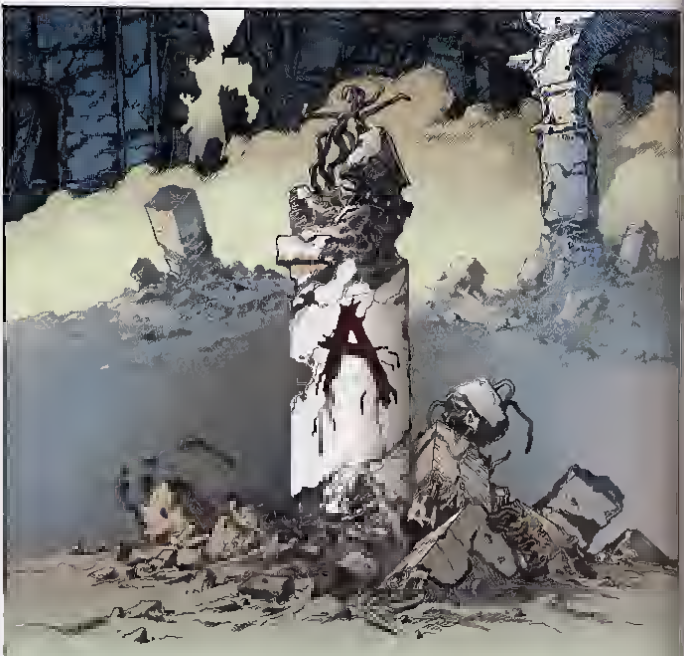
DRRRRRN
DRRRRN
LET'S GO!!!

DRRRNNNN
DRRNNNN

DRRRRRN
!
YAMAGATA...?

!
AND TETSUO!!





AKIRA

THE END

AKIRA
TRIBUTES

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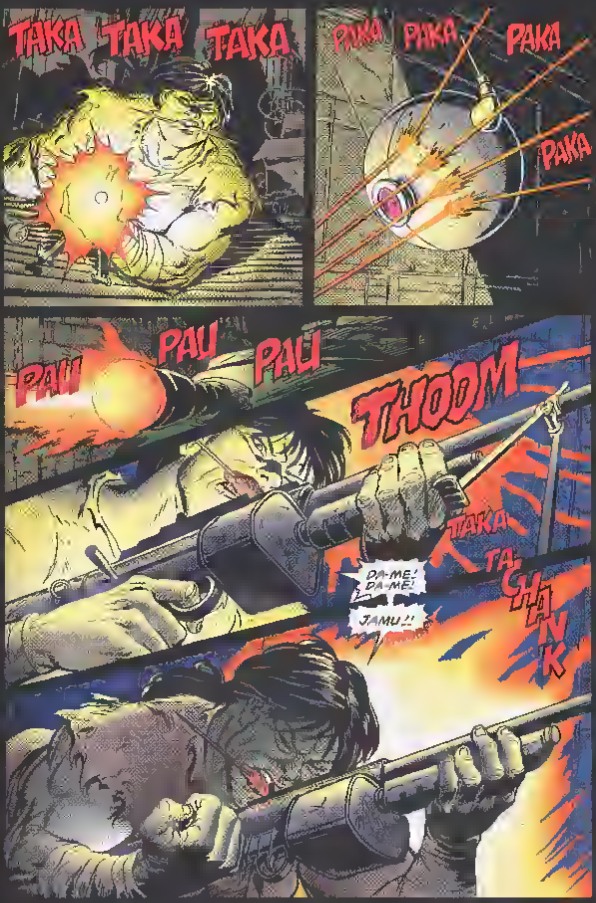
MIKE ALLRED, JOHN ROMITA
ALEX TOTH, KEVIN O'NEIL
JOHN VAN FLEET

YAKITORI
ITADAKIMASU
LARRY HAMA
SCRIPT
BRET BLEVINS
ART
STEVE BUCCELLATO
COLORS

MMMM...
NGGGG...
ARA!
Ping
ZZZZZ
Ping

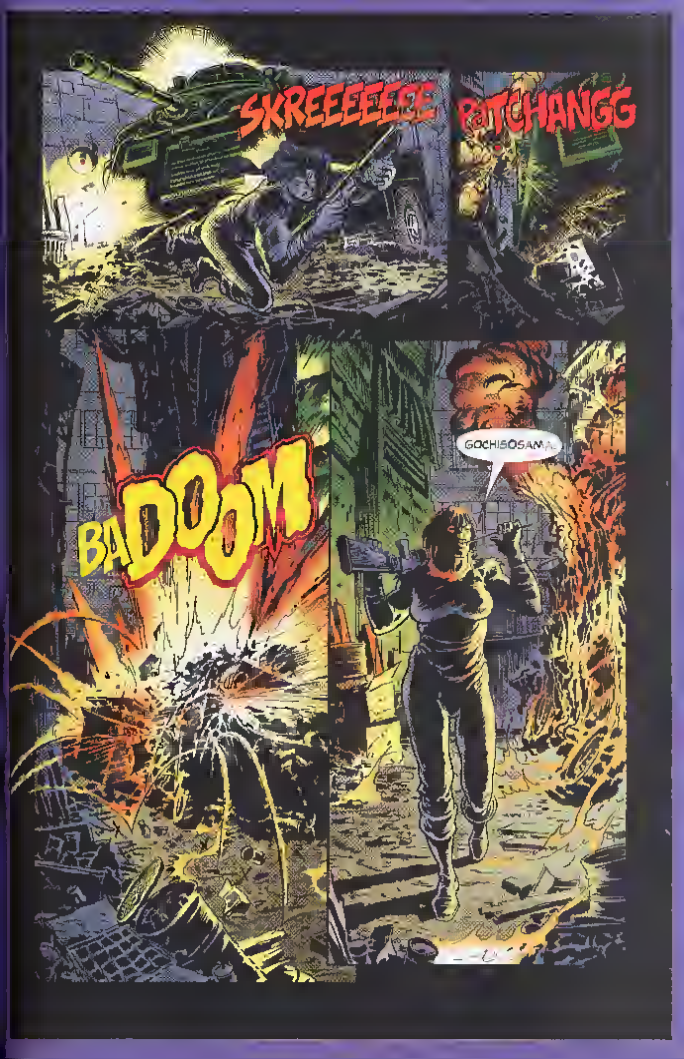
ZIIZZ
Ping
NANI=?
CHIKU-SHAW!!
GAJONG
GAJONG
GAAAA!


TAKA TAKA TAKA
PAKA PAKA PAKA
PAKA
PAU PAU PAU
THOOM
TAKA
TA-CHA-NK
DA-ME! DA-ME!
JAMU!!

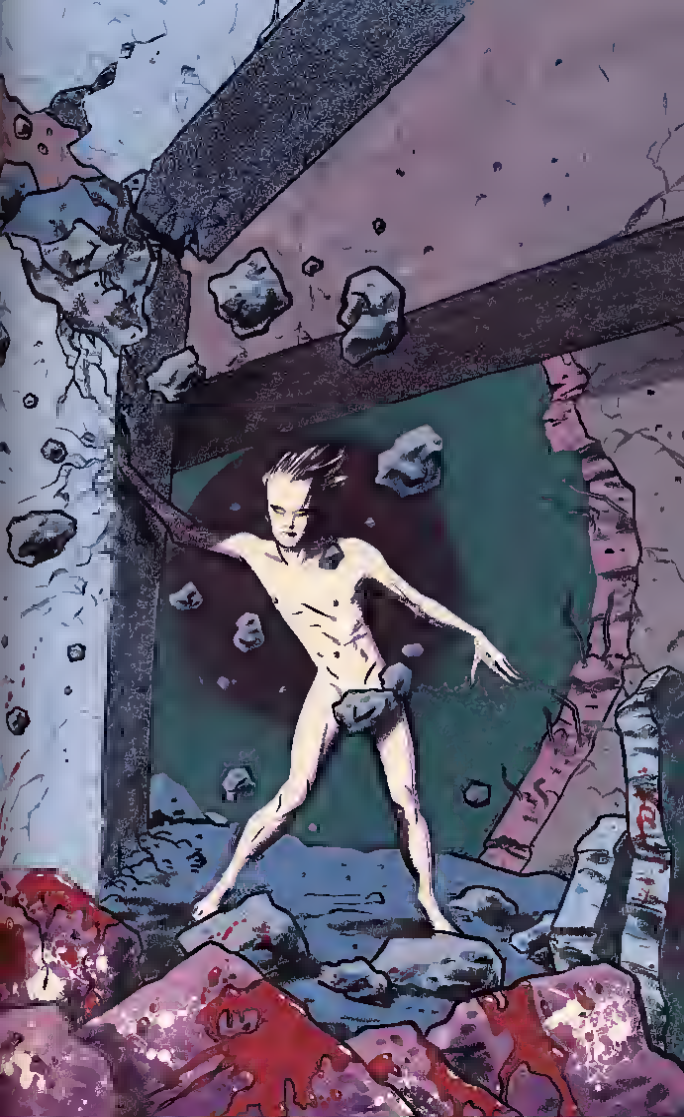
GAJONG GAJONG
KACHONG
GUJU
GUJU
DA-ME!
PAU
PAU
PAU
PAU

TCHA
TCHA
TCHA
PA
CHONG
MIJIKAI!!!
BWEEEE
BWEEEE
Ping
GAJONG
GAJONG
MO-SHITOTSU~
JUGU

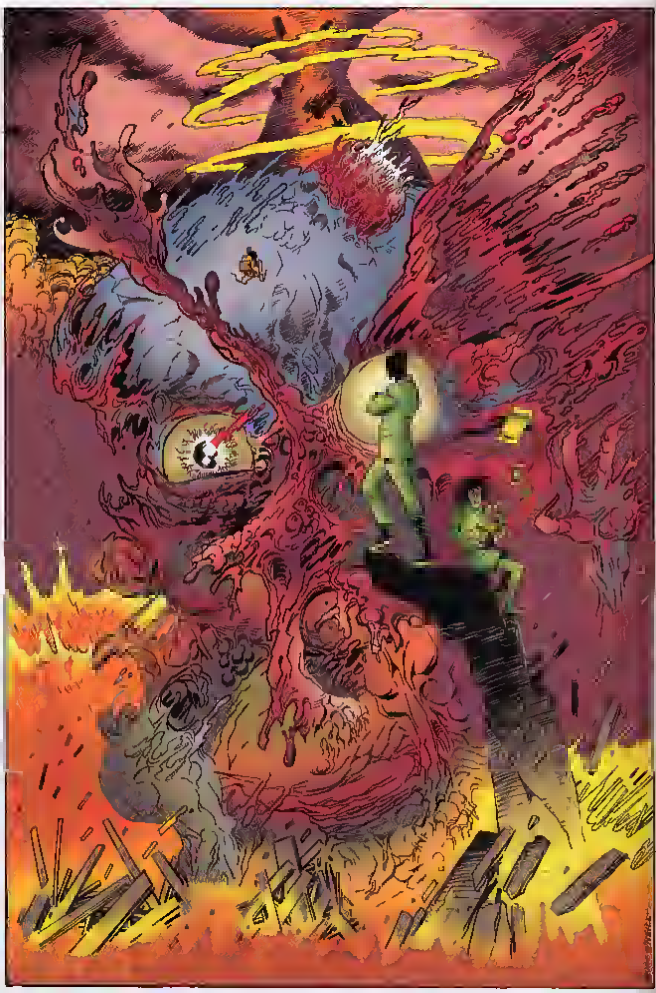
DETAIL!!
PATA
Ping
GAJONG
GAJONG
TAKA
TAKA
BARA
BARA
BARA


SKREEEEEEE
PATCHANGG
BADOOM
GOCHISOSAMA

ATOMIC RULES!
MASA SHIROW
MADUREIRA
& MARDER



JOHN ROMITA



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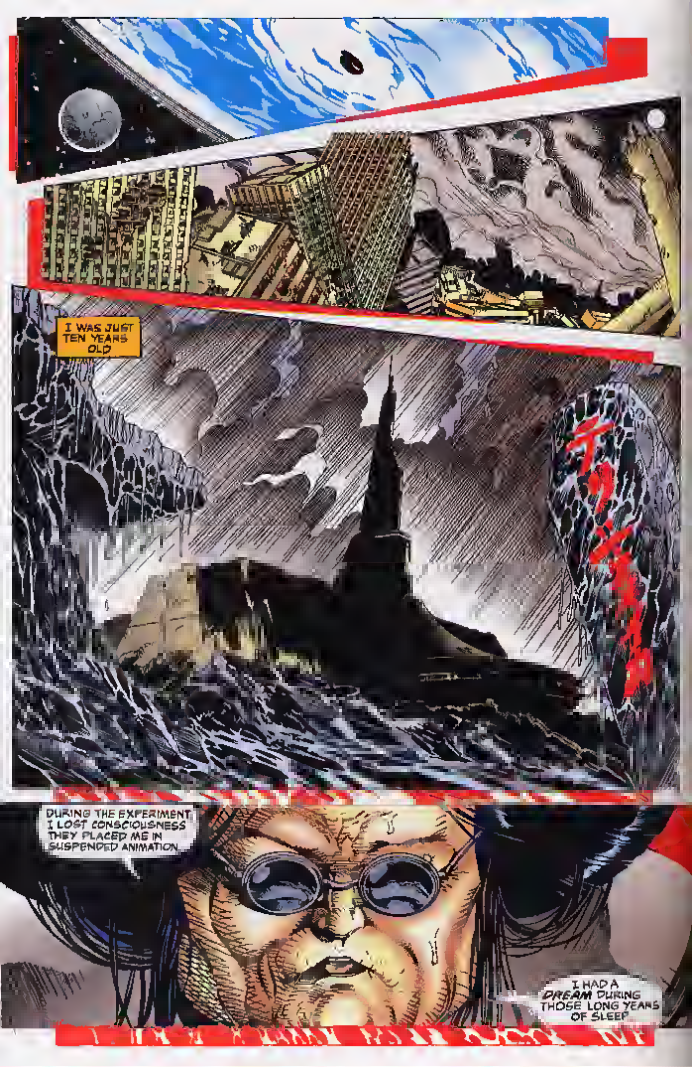
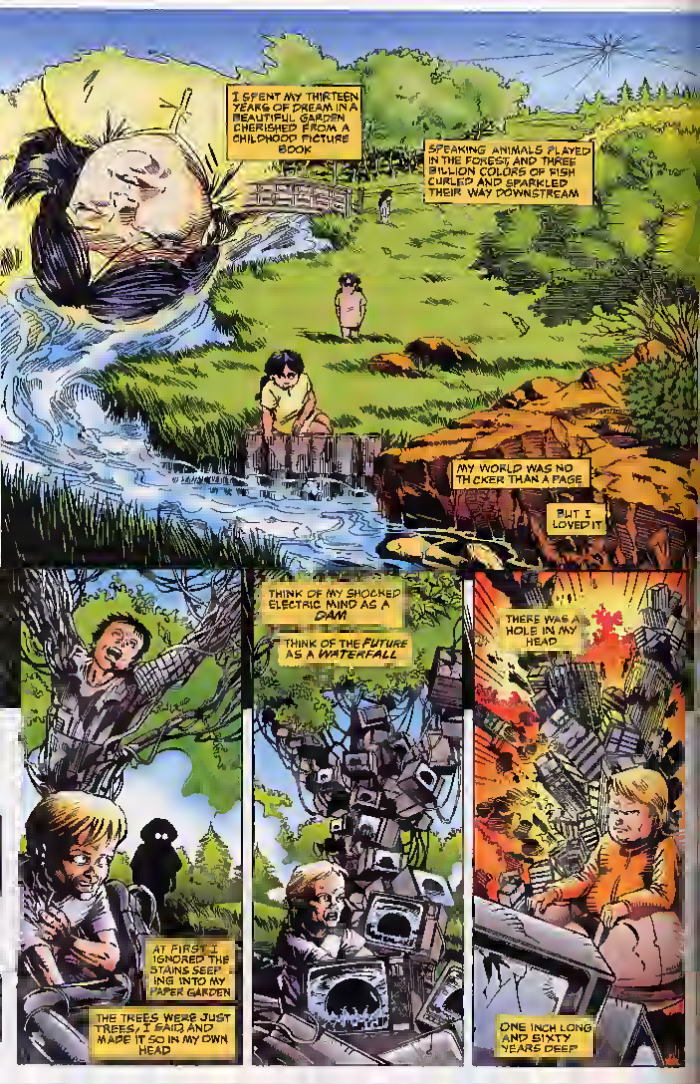
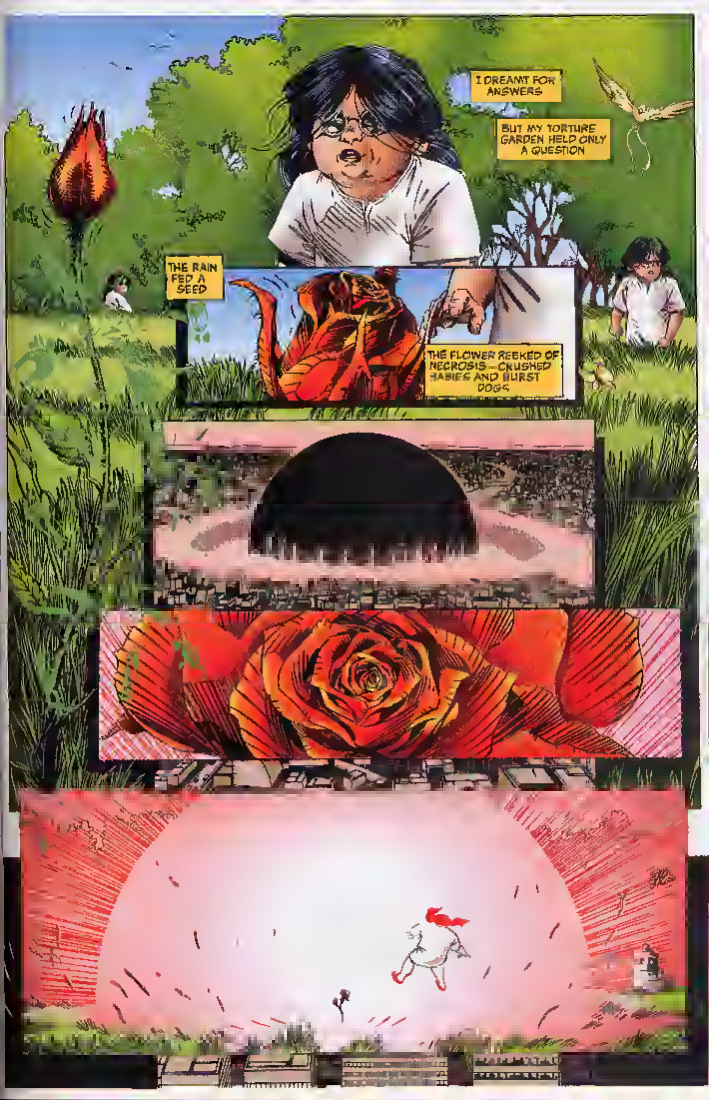

I WAS JUST TEN YEARS OLD
DURING THE EXPERIMENT I LOST CONSCIOUSNESS THEY PLACED ME IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION
I HAD A DREAM DURING THOSE LONG YEARS OF SLEEP

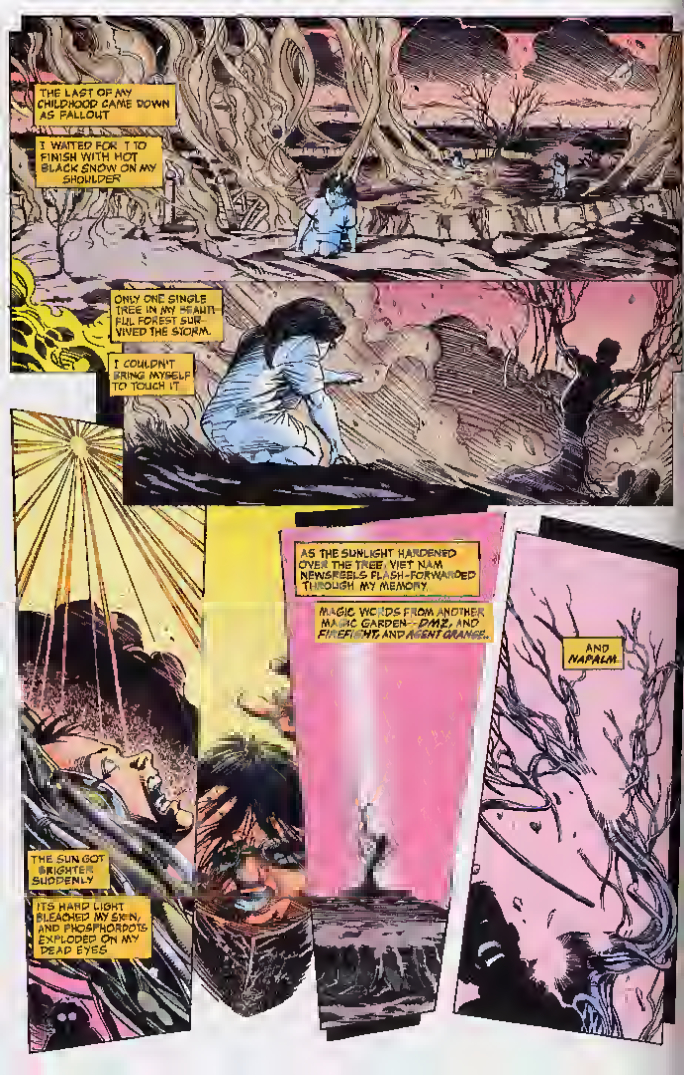
IT WAS COMPOSED OF FRAGMENTARY IMAGES
OF AKIRA, NEO TOKYO.
...OF TETSUO... THE FUTURE...
Candy Flower
NAPALM
STORY-WARREN ELLIS
ART-TERRY SHOEMAKER
COLOR-BRIAN BUCCELLATO


I SPENT MY THIRTEEN YEARS OF DREAM IN A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN CHERISHED FROM A CHILDHOOD PICTURE BOOK
SPEAKING ANIMALS PLAYED IN THE FOREST, AND THREE BILLION COLORS OF FISH CURLED AND SPARKLED THEIR WAY DOWNSTREAM
MY WORLD WAS NO THICKER THAN A PAGE
BUT I LOVED IT
AT FIRST I IGNORED THE STAINS SEEPING INTO MY PAPER GARDEN
THE TREES WERE JUST TREES, I SAID, AND MADE IT SO IN MY OWN HEAD
THINK OF MY SHOCKED ELECTRIC MIND AS A DAM
THINK OF THE FUTURE AS A WATERFALL
THERE WAS A HOLE IN MY HEAD
ONE INCH LONG AND SIXTY YEARS DEEP

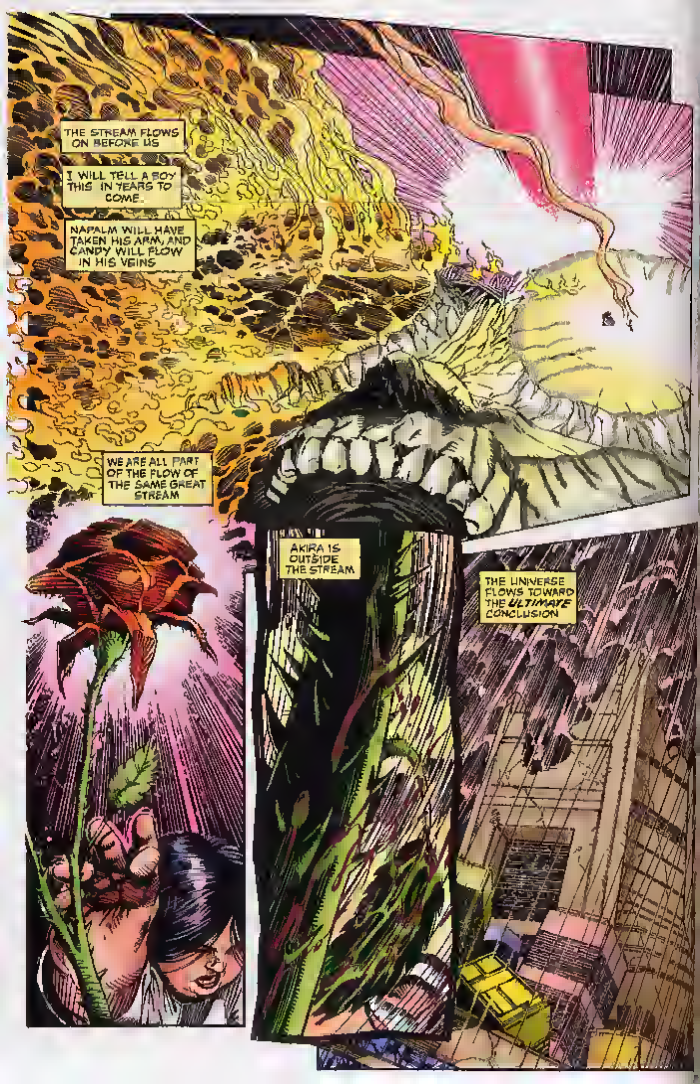
ONE DAY, THE HOLE GOT BIG ENOUGH FOR THE RAIN TO FALL THROUGH
CANDY RAIN, WRAPPED IN LURID GREEN AND SUFFOCATING WHITE.
I DIDN'T TRUST IT.
I NEVER LIKED CANDY TOO EASY A PLEASURE
FISH BECAME BOYS HURLING THEMSELVES OUT OF THEIR STREAM
THEY DIDN'T EVEN UNWRAP THE STUFF
THEY TOOK IT IN WOLFISH GULPS LIKE DROWNING MEN SURFACING IN AIR.
NEEDING IT
ONE ATE MORE THAN THE OTHERS
HIS EYES LIT UP LIKE CREMATION FIRES, AND HIS BELLY BECAME TIGHT AND DISTENDED.
CANDY GRINS ON EASY FACES, SMELLING OF LOCKER ROOMS AND BEDSHEETS
I NEVER TRUSTED BOYS

THE OTHER BOYS COULDN'T HANDLE THE CANDY
THEY GOT SICK
THE FUTURES RAN IN THEIR BLOOD AND JUICES
BUT THE STRONG BOY THE CANDY MADE HIM STRONGER
HE RAN INTO THE FOREST– SEPARATED FOREVER FROM THE ORDINARY STREAM
THE BLOOD ON MY PAPER GARDEN DROVE ME OUT OF MY MIND– LITERALLY
MY SUBCONSCIOUS PROMED BEYOND MY CRYOCHAMBER, LOOKING FOR A SAFER LIE TO HIDE IN
INSTEAD, I FOUND... RELIGION
SHE'S
OHHH
SHE'S WATCHING US.
NO RECENT OCCIDENTAL GOD WAS IN THEM, AND, IN MY HORROR, NO TOLERANT BUDDHA WAS IN ME
FOR MY WORLD – BE IT CLEAN PAPER OR FILTHY TRUTH – TO MAKE SENSE I NEEDED SOMETHING ELSE


I DREAMT FOR ANSWERS
BUT MY TORTURE GARDEN HELD ONLY A QUESTION
THE RAIN FED A SEED
THE FLOWER REEKED OF NECROSIS—CRUSHED BABIES AND BURST DOGS


THE LAST OF MY CHILDHOOD CAME DOWN AS FALLOUT
I WAITED FOR IT TO FINISH WITH HOT BLACK SNOW ON MY SHOULDER
ONLY ONE SINGLE TREE IN MY BEAUTIFUL FOREST SURVIVED THE STORM.
I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO TOUCH IT.
AS THE SUNLIGHT HARDENED OVER THE TREE, VIET NAM NEWSREELS FLASH-FORWARDED THROUGH MY MEMORY.
MAGIC WORDS FROM ANOTHER MAGIC GARDEN--DMZ, AND FIREFIGHT, AND AGENT ORANGE..
AND NAPALM.
THE SUN GOT BRIGHTER SUDDENLY.
ITS HARD LIGHT BLEACHED MY SKIN, AND PHOSPHORDOTS EXPLODED ON MY DEAD EYES

THEN IT HIT ME
PRECOGNITION IS NOT LIKE HAVING A DOSSIER ON THE FUTURE DROPPED AT YOUR FEET
IT REQUIRES STRENGTH, AND FAITH. IT MUST BE DECIPHERED
SO I STOOD IN MY COLD GARDEN AND READ THE FUTURE IN THE MOVEMENT OF BLOOD IN AIR
CANDY
FLOWER.
NAPALM.


THE STREAM FLOWS ON BEFORE US
I WILL TELL A BOY THIS IN YEARS TO COME..
NAPALM WILL HAVE TAKEN HIS ARM, AND CANDY WILL FLOW IN HIS VEINS
WE ARE ALL PART OF THE FLOW OF THE SAME GREAT STREAM
AKIRA IS OUTSIDE THE STREAM
THE UNIVERSE FLOWS TOWARD THE ULTIMATE CONCLUSION

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MARIE JAVINS
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editor in chief

This is where it all comes together — and threatens to tear the planet apart. Ground troops move into the wreckage, bringing supplies to cover the fact that they're here to take the city by force. In a world hammered by change, the military's only desire is a return to the status quo. But the citizens of Neo-Tokyo have tasted the future — and they're not willing to stop back without a fight. The war machines have been set loose against a ragtag army of rebels with little more than faith on its side. And the fate of a new empire hangs in the balance. Don't dare miss this thunderous conclusion to the Akira legend!

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

DIRECT EDITION